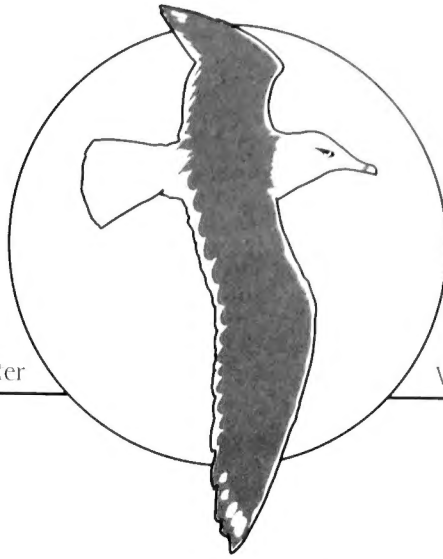


# The Gull



JUL 24 2000

Golden Gate Audubon Society Newsletter

Volume 80, No. 6 June 1998

## Cheers to a Wonderful Day *by John Gibbons*

**W**e knew the wine would be wonderful, and the cheese would be great, but lately good weather is the last thing to expect. But luckily El Niño was on siesta and Mother Nature was in a generous mood.....The Golden Gate Audubon Society's wine and cheese tasting could not have been more perfect!

In celebration of John J. Audubon's birthday, GGAS hosted an afternoon of food, drink, and good company at the Beautiful Dunsmuir House and Gardens

Estate in Oakland on April 26. It was a good chance not only to relax, but to also meet many of the Society's board members and to be updated on GGAS's activities and concerns.

When the guests returned from their birding walk on the estate's grounds, they were treated to tables full of wine and cheese that was donated from many local establishments. Merlots and chardonnays to table whites and cabernets; brie to Monterey Jack, the choices went on and on. While sampling all of these wonderful offerings, the guests were greeted and updated on GGAS by Debi Zito, president and Arthur Feinstein, the Society's Executive Director. Leora Feeney also reported to everyone the wonderful progress at the Alameda wildlife refuge.

We were fortunate enough to have Don and Sally Schmitt staff the tables and not only pour the wine but also inform everyone about the things they were sampling. What made the donations particularly special is that many of them come from organic vineyards and farms, such as the Schmitt's Apple Farm, where they have been organically farming for 15 years. A great bonus is that they are also environmentally aware farmers who make their land "user friendly" to native wildlife. Wood

*Continued on page 8*



PHOTO BY JOHN GIBBONS

*GGAS President Debi Zito welcomes everyone to a great day of food, wine and sun.*

## Just Under 200

by Alan Hopkins

***Athletes have the Olympics, birdwatchers have the Birdathon! With "spotting as many species as possible" as the goal, a hectic and busy day of birding is assured. Just follow Alan Hopkins around on his day of the '98 Birdathon if you have any doubts:***

Jennifer and I started at about dawn near Los Banos. Our first bird was a Barn Owl, shortly thereafter we found a Great Horned Owl, and we were overjoyed to watch a Northern Harrier chasing a Short-eared Owl! It was cold and windy, but before we reached the town (appropriately named) Gustine, we saw, among the other Central Valley marsh birds, American Bittern, White-faced Ibis, White Pelican, and Redhead.

With the pedal to the metal we shot up I 5 to the Patterson exit and on to Del Puerto Canyon Road. We were stopped at a small pond, studying a Yellowlegs, when a minivan and a sport utility vehicle pulled up next to us, it was the other City birding group of Harry Fuller, Mark Eaton, Dan Murphy and former S.F. resident Scott Morrical. After we said our brief hellos we were on our way. The last we saw of them, they were watching three Golden Eagles soaring above the Costa's Hummingbird Painted Rock stop.

There were almost no migrants along the way, however, we did see four wrens, Lewis' Woodpecker, Phainopepla, and a pair of Common Mergansers. Probably the highlight of the day was a Northern Pygmy-Owl we

found along Del Puerto Canyon with a snake in its bill.

On the way to Alameda I made a serendipitous wrong turn, thereby avoiding a major traffic jam. Searching the pickleweed at Arrowhead Marsh we found Red Knots among the Dowitchers, and four Clapper Rails near the boardwalk. With two or three more stops we spotted Least Terns in with Caspian and Forester's, and later a Red-necked Grebe. Our luck with traffic ended as we approached the Bay Bridge Toll Plaza. But the stop-and-go traffic gave Jennifer time to spot two Long-billed Curlews along the Emeryville Crescent.

By the time we reached Golden Gate park we were way behind schedule. We checked some oaks for migrants and found none. After we listed Brown Creeper, Pygmy Nuthatch, Red-breasted Merganser and Hooded Oriole we headed for the San Mateo coast.

In Pacifica we stopped for gas, bathrooms, Black Scoter, and Sooty Shearwater. As I drove along Highway 1, Jennifer assured me that we would get the Red-shouldered Hawk that sits on the wires near Half Moon Bay. I replied that the bird is never there for Birdathons. I was right.

Near Pescadero we found

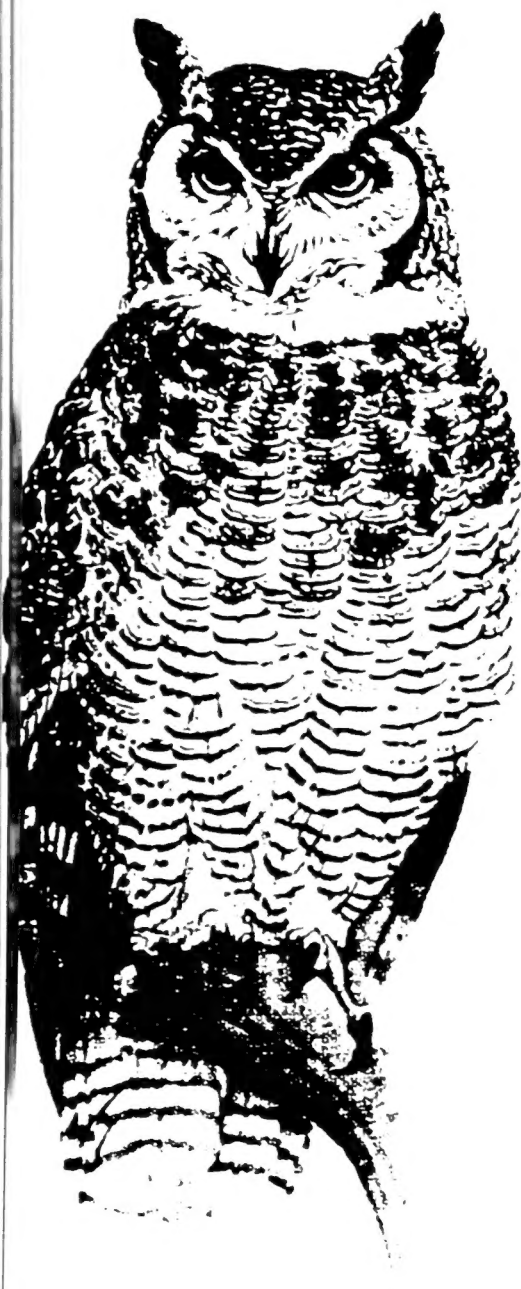
Surfbirds, Black Turnstones and Black Oystercatchers. The time we spent at the base of the Pigeon Point Lighthouse was quite productive for seabirds; we spotted Pacific Loons, Brants, Rhinoceros Auklets, and Marbled Murrelets. We were still missing Heermann's Gull from our day list, so we made one last ditch effort for the gull at the mouth of Gazos Creek. We didn't find the gulls but we cheered as two Golden-crowned Sparrows appeared as we drove out of the parking lot.

As we came inland it was clear that the flocks of migrants we hoped for were not going to materialize. Birding along the creek's edge was not without rewards, for we found Winter Wren, Purple Finch, Swainson's Thrush, Golden-crowned Kinglet, and a Sharp-shinned Hawk. Since before dawn we had been moving at a hectic pace. In the last remaining daylight we walked slowly among the redwoods listening. In the distance children played, a chorus of frogs rose and fell, and overhead a community of Acorn Woodpeckers squabbled and yacked over roosting sites. And then it was dark, and all was quiet. As we walked along in the blackness, there was a high moaning call, and next came rapid "toot toot toot" calls, it was a Saw-whet Owl; our final bird for the day.

After nineteen hours of birding we had totaled 172 species, and had a great time in the process. Next year I have my sights set on 200!

## Marallon Islands Bird List:

Eared Grebe  
Leach's Storm-Petrel  
Brown Pelican  
Double-crested Cormorant  
Brandt's Cormorant  
Pelagic Cormorant  
Black Oystercatcher  
Wandering Tattler  
Whimbrel  
Black Turnstone  
Western Gull  
Common Murre  
Leucis Guillemot  
Cassin's Auklet  
Rhynchoceros Auklet  
Rufous Hummingbird  
Yellow-rumped (Audubon's) Warbler  
House Sparrow



## Jennifer and Alan's 172 species:

Red-throated Loon	Willet	Yellow-billed Magpie
Pacific Loon	Whimbrel	American Crow
Common Loon	Long-billed Curlew	Common Raven
Pied-billed Grebe	Marbled Godwit	Chestnut-backed Chickadee
Horned Grebe	Black Turnstone	Plain Titmouse
Red-necked Grebe	Surfbird	Bushtit
Eared Grebe	Red Knot	White-breasted Nuthatch
Western Grebe	Sanderling	Pygmy Nuthatch
Sooty Shearwater	Western Sandpiper	Brown Creeper
American White Pelican	Least Sandpiper	Rock Wren
Brown Pelican	Dunlin	Canyon Wren
Double-crested Cormorant	Short-billed Dowitcher	Bewick's Wren
Brandt's Cormorant	Long-billed Dowitcher	House Wren
Pelagic Cormorant	Common Snipe	Winter Wren
American Bittern	phalarope species	Marsh Wren
Great Blue Heron	Bonaparte's Gull	Golden-crowned Kinglet
Great Egret	Ring-billed Gull	Western Bluebird
Snowy Egret	California Gull	Swainson's Thrush
Green Heron	Western Gull	Hermit Thrush
Black-crowned Night Heron	Glaucous-winged Gull	American Robin
White-faced Ibis	Caspian Tern	Wrentit
Brant	Forster's Tern	Northern Mockingbird
Canada Goose	Least Tern	California Thrasher
Wood Duck	Common Murre	Cedar Waxwing
Green-winged Teal	Marbled Murrelet	Phainopepla
Mallard	Rhinoceros Auklet	Loggerhead Shrike
Northern Pintail	Rock Dove	European Starling
Cinnamon Teal	Band-tailed Pigeon	Hutton's Vireo
Northern Shoveler	Mourning Dove	Warbling Vireo
Gadwall	Barn Owl	Orange-crowned Warbler
Redhead	Great Horned Owl	Wilson's Warbler
Ring-necked Duck	Northern Pygmy-Owl	Common Yellowthroat
Greater Scaup	Short-eared Owl	Western Tanager
Black Scoter	Northern Saw-whet Owl	Black-headed Grosbeak
Surf Scoter	White-throated Swift	Lazuli Bunting
Bufflehead	Anna's Hummingbird	Spotted Towhee
Common Merganser	Costa's Hummingbird	California Towhee
Red-breasted Merganser	Allen's Hummingbird	Rufous-crowned Sparrow
Ruddy Duck	Lewis' Woodpecker	Chipping Sparrow
Turkey Vulture	Acorn Woodpecker	Lark Sparrow
Northern Harrier	Nuttall's Woodpecker	Savannah Sparrow
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Downy Woodpecker	Song Sparrow
Red-tailed Hawk	Northern Flicker	Golden-crowned Sparrow
Golden Eagle	Pacific-slope Flycatcher	White-crowned Sparrow
American Kestrel	Black Phoebe	Dark-eyed Junco
Ring-necked Pheasant	Say's Phoebe	Red-winged Blackbird
California Quail	Ash-throated Flycatcher	Tri-colored Blackbird
Clapper Rail	Western Kingbird	Western Meadowlark
Virginia Rail	Horned Lark	Brewers Blackbird
Common Moorhen	Tree Swallow	Brown-headed Cowbird
A. Coot	Violet-green Swallow	Hooded Oriole
Black-bellied Plover	Northern Rough-winged	Bullock's Oriole
Semipalmated Plover	Swallow	Purple Finch
Killdeer	Bank Swallow	House Finch
Black Oystercatcher	Cliff Swallow	Lesser Goldfinch
Black-necked stilt	Barn Swallow	House Sparrow
American Avocet	Steller's Jay	
Greater Yellowlegs	Scrub Jay	



**W**hat a difference three weeks can make! On our last visit to Bodega Bay a pair of Western Bluebirds whad been inspecting the bird box. Both the male and female checked out the interior separately as well as together, sometimes with nesting material in their beaks. The strong winter winds had literally blown the box's stake out of the ground, so my husband sank a piece of manzanita from Mt. Diablo into the ground and secured the bird box among the branches. The bluebirds loved the newly-provided perches atop their mansion. To me there is nothing more beautiful than a bluebird and since I seldom see them at home, I feasted my eyes all that weekend. I was eager to see their progress, expecting them to be brooding eggs soon.

Imagine my surprise, when we returned three weeks later, to see a pair of Tree Swallows using the manzanita perches and inspecting the box! The female made many trips into the box with beaks full of grass. I didn't want to disturb them by peeking inside, so the mystery will remain unsolved till the nesting season is over. Maybe then I can see if the bluebirds did indeed start building a nest (I have last year's). I wonder if the bluebirds found another home? Or did the bluebirds begin nesting only to have the tree swallows successfully usurp the box? I wish I could have followed the whole scenario.

I looked in my bird reference books for clues. Little is known

about the length of time Western Bluebirds brood their eggs or how old the chicks are when they fledge. Still, I doubt that all that could have taken place in only 3 weeks. Tree Swallows, on the other hand, are known to compete for nesting sites with bluebirds. They incubate their 4-6 eggs for 13-16 days and the young fledge 16-24 days after hatching. (Since their eggs do not hatch at the same time, that probably accounts for the long fledging time.)

I must admit that I enjoy swallows and find it a treat to observe them perched. Nothing is more frustrating than trying to track a flying swallow with your binoculars, hoping to catch a glimpse of any field mark to distinguish it from its close relatives. Since swallows are very "tame", I was able to look at them closely. The male Tree Swallow is steely blue-black or green-black (iridescent) above and pure white below. It glides in circles, ending the glide with quick flaps and a short climb. The female I observed was dusky brownish black with dull teal blue wing bars which only shone in sunlight.

Swifts are often confused with swallows in flight. But swifts' wings curve backwards and their bodies are more streamlined. They have short, stiff tails, although they can be notched like swallows' tails. While swallows fly low to the ground, swifts fly higher in the air with rapid, shallow wingbeats and short glides higher in the air, a flight described as "twinkly."

Until the mystery is solved, I should be happy to have exchanged one pair of beautiful insect-eaters for another equally hungry pair. Who could complain? Two for the price of one!



## Gifts and Bequests

AT&T, John & Elsie Becker, Sheila Dickie, Carolyn Jones, Michael & Irene Garbov, Leslie Lethridge, William Milestone, John Sproul

### Clapper Rail Circle

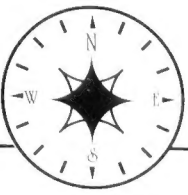
Mary Foley, James Hand & Claudia Windfuhr, Totten & Joanne Heffelfinger, Craig & Martha Spriggs

### Least Tern Circle

Mary Schaefer

The Society welcomes gifts in general or gifts in honor of or in memory of relatives and friends. Such gifts will be used as specified by the donor or, if unspecified, at the discretion of the GGAS Board of Directors. This includes their use of general GGAS activities or for special programs of the Society. Please send your gift in the form of a check made out to Golden Gate Audubon Society, 2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite G, Berkeley, CA 94702. All gifts are tax deductible. The Society is also appreciative of any bequests. Such bequests should specify as recipient the Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc. All gifts, donations and bequests will be acknowledged in *The Gull*, as well as personally on behalf of the Society by the Secretary.





## Field Trips Calendar

**G**AS field trips are conducted by experienced birders who wish to share their knowledge and love of birds with others. All trips are free of charge (except for entrance fees that may be charged by regional, state, or national parks) and are open to everyone, regardless of membership in the National Audubon Society or Golden Gate chapter.

### **FRIDAY – SUNDAY, JUNE 5 – 7 YOSEMITE'S BIRD LIFE.**

SEE APRIL GULL FOR DETAILS.  
Leader: Dave Quady (510) 704-9353. \$(\*)

### **SATURDAY, JUNE 6 HAYWARD SHORELINE.**

SEE MAY GULL FOR DETAILS.  
Leader: Bob Lewis (510) 845-5001.

### **SUNDAY, JUNE 7 STRYBING ARBORETUM.**

SEE MAY GULL FOR DETAILS.  
Leaders: Allan Ridley and Helen McKenna. (415) 566-3241.

### **WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10 MINI-TRIP TO REDWOODS REGIONAL PARK.**

SEE MAY GULL FOR DETAILS.  
Leaders: Anna Wilcox (510) 351-9301 and Jean-Marie Spoelman. \$(\*)

### **SATURDAY, JUNE 13 MONO COUNTY BREEDING BIRD SURVEY.**

SEE MAY GULL FOR DETAILS. For information call Emilie Strauss (510) 540-8749.

### **SUNDAY, JUNE 14 LUNDY CANYON**

(Near Mono Lake) SEE MAY GULL FOR DETAILS. Leader: Rusty Scalf (510) 666-9936.

### **SATURDAY–SUNDAY, JUNE 20–21 YUBA PASS.**

SEE MAY GULL FOR DETAILS.  
Leader: Peter Allen (415) 892-8063. (\*)

### **SATURDAY, JUNE 20 TENNESSEE COVE, GOLDEN GATE NATIONAL RECREATION AREA.**

Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the trailhead. From San Francisco take Hwy. 101 north to Marin Co. and exit on Hwy. 1 toward Mill Valley and Stinson Beach. After about 1 mile, turn left onto Tennessee Valley Road and continue to the end of the road. This approximately 3-mile round trip walk will take us through lush riparian habitat. We hope to see nesting hawks and other breeding birds, including Common Yellowthroat, Wilson's and possibly MacGillivray's Warbler. Lunch optional for this half day trip. Beginners welcome. Leader: Bob Hogan (415) 258-0811. (\*)

### **FRIDAY–SUNDAY, JUNE 26–28 LASSEN VOLCANIC NATIONAL PARK.**

SEE MAY GULL FOR DETAILS.  
Leaders: Dan and Joan Murphy (415) 564-0074. \$(\*)

***Plan Ahead for these two popular traditional GGAS trips, which are By Reservation Only:***

### **YOSEMITE ALPINE ECOLOGY.**

Probable dates – Sat.–Sun., August 1–2. Call leader, George Peyton, for information and reservations. (510) 444-3131, weekdays. \$(\*)

### **BACKPACKING TRIP IN LASSEN VOLCANIC NATIONAL PARK.**

Fri.–Mon., August 14 – 17. Leaders: David Rice and Robin Pulich. For details and reservations, call David Rice (510) 527-7210. \$(\*)

## Thar She Blows!

**G**olden Gate Audubon and Shearwater Journeys are teaming up to offer GGAS members a pelagic trip to the Monterey Bay, Sunday, August 16.

August is a good time to look for Long-tailed Jaeger and Black-footed Albatross, Mammal sightings have included Humpback, Blue, and Baird's Beaked whales, Common, White-sided, and Northern Right-whale dolphins, & Dall's, and Harbor Porpoise.

Meet at Sam's Fishing Shop on Monterey's Fisherman's Wharf at 7:00 a.m., the boat departs at 7:30. Please be prompt! Bring food, and clothing appropriate for a cool and possibly splashy day.

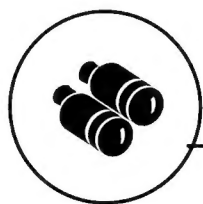
The price is \$59 per person. For more information please call *only* Alan Hopkins at (415) 664-098

To register send a check, phone number and a **self addressed stamped envelope** to:

Shearwater Journeys  
P.O. Box 190  
Hollister, CA 95024



Trips marked with a (\$) go to parks or other sites that require an entrance fee. Carpooling arrangements will be attempted for trips marked with a (\*). See below. Problems, etc.: If you need a ride or can take a passenger, if you need information and have difficulty reaching a field trip leader, if you have suggestions for trips, or if you are interested in leading a trip, call Lillian Fujii (510) 256-4167, Field Trips Committee Chair.



March 28 - April 29, 1998

**D**efinitive signs of spring are here, with the advent of singing Black-headed Grosbeaks, nesting Western Bluebirds, swallows and raptors, among others, and the coming of at least a few welcome warm and sunny days. Access to some birding areas such as Big Sur in Monterey continues to be difficult due to storm-damaged roads. This report also includes a few observations from early March that were received too late for last month's column.

## Albatross to Ducks

There were no further reports of the Laysan Albatross from Pt. Arena during the present period, consistent with its previous annual leave-taking. Windy weather the last week of April produced Laysan and Black-footed albatross on Monterey Bay (MPRBA). Five Black-footed Albatross and a single Short-tailed Shearwater were reported from the

Cordell Bank Mar. 8 (DN). That pelagic trip also produced 235 Northern Fulmars. The high count of Sooty Shearwaters for the period was 150 off Pigeon Pt., SM, Apr. 16 (PM). Only one Pink-footed Shearwater was seen that day. By far the most exciting seabird was a **Brown Booby** seen on the Farallones Apr. 2 (KH). Most Brown Boobies in California are found at the Salton Sea, but there have been several recent records at the Farallones, which is the farthest north they have been reported in the state.

Unusual was the report of a single Tundra Swan flying over Berkeley, ALA, Apr. 12 (RS). A lone Ross' Goose, present since December, was still at the Carmel R. mouth, MTY, Apr. 8 (MPRBA). There was a "Eurasian" Green-winged Teal at Aracata Marsh, HUM, Apr. 7 (GB). Eurasian Wigeons lingered in the area, with one at Bolinas Lagoon, MRN, Mar. 28 (TO), one at Palo Alto Baylands, SCL, Mar. 29 (MD), one at Alviso, SCL, Apr. 2-3 (DW) and 2 at Steinberger Slough, SM, Apr. 12 (RT). A Tufted Duck was noted at Las Gallinas Sewage Ponds, MRN, Mar. 29 (LS). There was a Harlequin Duck at Van Damme State Park, MEN, Apr. 25 (JW). The Harlequin Duck, which has been at Monterey Harbor for months, continued as of Apr. 21, as did the Oldsquaw at Moss Landing, MTY, Apr. 26 (MPRBA). Other single Oldsquaws were reported from Abbott's Lagoon, PRNS, MRN, Apr. 9 (MRu), from Arcata Marsh, HUM, Apr. 7 (GB), and near Steinberger Slough on San Francisco Bay, SM (RT). Consistent with their usual spring disappearance to their northern breeding grounds, only 4 Hooded Mergansers were reported, 2 near Orick, HUM, Apr. 15, and 2 at the Rush Creek Ponds, MRN, Apr. 26 (LL).

## Raptors to Alcids

Unusual raptor reports were scanty this month, limited to 2 Swainson's Hawks on Curry Rd., SOL, Mar. 29 (DS), and a very late Ferruginous Hawk at Patterson Pass and Grant Line Rds., SJ, Apr. 24 (DSc). Three Lesser Yellowlegs were at Alviso, SCL, Apr. 19 and one at Pescadero Marsh, SM, Apr. 22 (PM). Individual Solitary Sandpipers, rare but regular spring migrants, were seen at Arzino Ranch, Alviso, SCL, Apr. 19 (PM), at PRNS, MRN, Apr. 20 (RSt), and at the Ukiah Treatment Plant, MEN, Apr. 25 (JW), and 2 other birds (they usually seem to travel alone) were at the Clifton Court Forebay, CC, Apr. 29 (MF). The Rock Sandpiper, now in alternate plumage, was still at W. Cliff Dr., SCZ as of Apr. 8 (SC). Another long-staying individual remained at MacMerricher State Park, MEN, as of Apr. 4 (DT).

Two of the rare gulls continued: the first winter Laughing Gull was still at the gull roost on Moss Landing, MTY, up to Apr. 10 (MPRBA) and the probable immature (first-winter) **Lesser Black-backed Gull** first reported in October stayed at Lake Cunningham, San Jose, SCL, up until at least Mar. 31 (BM). Individual Glaucous Gulls were at the Coyote Creek Riparian Station, SCL, Mar. 31 (BM) and at the Cliffhouse, SF, Apr. 5, an unusual occurrence for the city (JM). Another rare visitor, an alternate-plumaged adult **Little Gull** was found at the Environmental Education Center in Alviso, SCL, Apr. 28 (SR). The Little Gull is an Old World species now breeding around the Great Lakes. Most California sightings have been in the winter (Small, 1994). The Mar. 8 Cordell Bank trip also yielded 85 Black-legged Kittiwakes (DN). Thirty-seven very early Elegant Terns were at Pescadero Beach Lagoon, SM, Apr.

**Abbreviations for Observers** JA, Jan Andersen; GB, Gary Bloomfield; MB, Marjorie Bouree; SC, Steve Chance; HC, Hugh Cotter; GD, Gary Deghi; MD, Matthew Dotter; ME, Mark Eaton; MF, Mike Feighner; GF, George Finger; SG, Steve Glover; TG, Tom Gray; PG, Pat Green; MH, Melody Hamilton; KH, Keith Hansen; MHa, Merry Havemen; KHe, Kristi Hein; AH, Alan Hopkins; LH, Lisa Hug; KI, Ken Irwin; RL, Rick Lebadour; TL, Tom Leskiw; LL, Leslie Lieurance; RLo, Randy Lowell; RLu, Randy Lubbell; MM, Mike Mammoser; JM, Jennifer Matkin; BM, Bert McKee; PM, Peter Metropolis; DM, Dan Murphy; DN, Dan Nelson; DvN, David Nelson; TO, Trent Orr; MP, Mike Parmeter; MR, Mike Rogers; SR, Steve Rottenborn; MRu, Mike Ruland; RS, Rusty Scalf; DSc, Don Schmoldt; DS, Doug Shaw; DSi, Dan Singer; RSt, Rich Stallcup; LS, Lang Stevenson; RT, Ron Thorn; DT, Dorothy Tobkin; SVL, Sherman Van Lew; BW, Bruce Webb; DW, Dave Weber; MW, Marion Weeks; DWh, Denise White; JW, Jerry White

**Abbreviations for Counties and Others** ALA, Alameda; BSOL, Big Sur Ornithology Laboratory; CC, Contra Costa; GGP, Golden Gate Park; HUM, Humboldt; MOB, Many Observers; MRN, Marin; MEN, Mendocino; MER, Merced; MTY, Monterey; MPRBA, Monterey Peninsula Rare Bird Alert; PRNS, Point Reyes National Seashore; SAC, Sacramento; SBT, San Benito; SF, San Francisco; SJ, San Joaquin; SM, San Mateo; SCL, Santa Clara; SCZ, Santa Cruz; SOL, Solano; SON, Sonoma; STA, Stanislaus; TRI, Trinity; YOL, Yolo.

15 (MB). An Arctic Tern flew off Patrick's Pt., HUM, Apr. 11 (KD) and 2 Common Terns were seen right on schedule Apr. 16 off Pigeon Pt., SM (PM). A Black Tern was at Clifton Court Forebay, CC, Apr. 27 (SG), followed by 6 others on Apr. 28 (MF). Single birds were also seen over San Felipe Lake, SBT, Apr. 26 (MR) and at Alviso, SCL Apr. 28 (DvN). The 9-13 Black Skimmers remained at the Palo Alto Baylands, SCL, as of Apr. 28 (MD). A Tufted Puffin was found at Trinidad Bay, HUM, Apr. 15 (MH).

### Nighthawks to Grackles

Two Lesser Nighthawks were at the Clifton Court Forebay, CC, Apr. 29 (MF). The first Vaux's Swifts of the spring appeared at Andrew Molera State Park, MTY, Apr. 14 (MPRBA). A Black-chinned Hummingbird was seen at a usual spot on Bethel Island Rd., CC, Apr. 20 and 27 (DWh, SG). Two Costa's Hummingbirds also returned to their customary location at Del Puerto Canyon Rd., STA, Mar. 30 (GF), with one on Apr. 18 (RLo); single birds were at Fort Bragg, MEN, Apr. 15-22 (DT, JW) and Mitchell Canyon, CC, Apr. 27 (LH). Calliope Hummingbirds were especially abundant, with at least 22 reported from Contra Costa, Monterey, San Jose, and Santa Clara counties during the period, with a high count of 12 in one day at Big Sur Ornithology Laboratory, Andrew Molera State Park, MTY, Apr. 14 (MPRBA). A much higher than average number of Rufous Hummingbirds has also been seen this month, even in San Francisco, where they relatively uncommon migrants.

A Least Flycatcher continued at Todd Ranch, HUM, Apr. 7 (TL). Hammond's Flycatchers, fairly common migrants through the coastal ranges of the interior, were abundant, with at least 30 seen over Contra Costa, Marin, Monterey, San Benito, San Francisco, San Mateo,

and Santa Clara counties (MOB), with a high count of 10 at Mitchell Canyon, CC, April 21 (RSt). Two Dusky Flycatchers, less-common migrants, were at Mitchell Canyon, CC Apr. 21 (RSt). Unusual was a Western Kingbird with nesting material at Garrapata St. Pk, MTY, Apr. 13, since the species is not known to nest in this coastal location (MPRBA). As of Apr. 8, the **Dusky-capped Flycatcher**, first reported in early December, remained at Neary's Lagoon, SCZ (MPRBA). Big Sur Ornithology Laboratory, MTY, had its first Ash-throated Flycatcher of the season Apr. 4 (MPRBA). Cassin's Vireos have returned in good numbers: there were single birds at Bolinas, MRN, Apr. 4 (KH), at Strybing Arboretum, Golden Gate Park, SF, Apr. 4 (KHe), at James Creek, Arcata, HUM, Apr. 15 (GB) and at Big Sur Ornithology Laboratory, MTY, Apr. 17 (MPRBA). The best representation was the appearance of 4-5 individuals at White Canyon, CC, Apr. 21 (RSt). An individual of its sister species, a Plumbeous Vireo, was also at White Canyon on the same date (RSt).

Unusual Wood Warblers continued to be sparsely reported, although the common Wilson's and Orange-crowned warblers seemed to be singing everywhere (DWh). The accompanying chart includes a Prothonotary Warbler sighting from March which missed making last month's column. The most unusual report was that of the Hooded Warbler in Marin County. This species is a very rare spring transient, with only about 6-7 records per season for the state (Small, 1994), and its early appearance may bode well for a rich season of migrating warblers. The first report of a Yellow-breasted Chat of the season was Apr. 20 at Bethel Island Rd., CC. The earliest Western Tanager ever recorded for the locale was seen at Pacific Grove, MTY, Apr. 5 (MPRBA).

## Warbler sightings

### Tennessee Warbler

Apr. 11	Tilden Park	
	Nature Area, CC	RS
Apr. 29	Mt. Davidson, SF	HC

### Palm Warbler

Apr. 14, 19	Harding Park Rd., SF	DM, DSi
Apr. 20	Drake's Beach, PRNS, SF	RSt
Apr. 18, 23	North Lake, SF	AH, RL

### Prothonotary Warbler

Mar. 8, 10	North Lake, SF	JA, ME
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### Hooded Warbler

Apr. 27	Limantour, PRNS,	MRN, MP
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The male **Northern Cardinal** in Henry Coe Park, SCL, Apr. 26 was most likely an escaped bird, but adds a wonderful color to this month's observations (MR).

A nesting pair of Yellow-billed Magpies, very rare in San Mateo County, was seen in Colma, SM, Apr. 13-26 (SVL, GD, MH, MF). There was also a nesting pair on Delta Rd., CC, April 17 (SG). Corvidae seem to be extending their range everywhere! A Sage Thrasher was at the Palo Alto Baylands Interpretive Center, SCL, Apr. 7 (BW). A Blue Grosbeak returned to its usual spot at Bethel Island Road, CC, Apr. 20 (DWh), and 1-4 were at Ed Levin Park, SCL, Apr. 19-27 (MM, RLu, TG). A Rose-breasted Grosbeak was at a private feeder in San Francisco, Apr. 6 (PG). The first Chipping Sparrow was seen Mar. 30 on San Antonio Valley Rd., SCL (GF), and there were 2 early Grasshopper Sparrows near Chileno Valley Rd., MRN, Apr. 23 (RL). An over-wintering White-throated Sparrow remained in Novato, MRN, up to Apr. 20 (MW), while another was found Apr. 18 near Middle Lake, SF (AH). A Sage Sparrow of the Bell's race, extremely rare in the city and potentially a first city record, was at Mt. Davidson, SF, Apr. 27 (DvN). The first spring report of a Lazuli Bunting was at Andrew Molera State Park, MTY, Apr. 14 (MPRBA). Last, but certainly of great interest was a **Common Grackle** reported at Big Sur, MTY, in mid-April, but which disappeared prior to Apr. 21 (MPRBA). This eastern and mid-western species is an exceedingly rare transient with only a few records in Northern California.



# A Wonderful Day

Continued from page 1

Ducks, Great Blue Herons, Blue Birds, and Barn Owls are just some of the many species that call it home.

Trefethen winery also considerate to its wild neighbors. It hosts a butterfly garden and environment to purposely encourage birds, with bluebird boxes, native plantings, and water. Along with the Red-tailed

Hawks that nest on the property, there are also orioles, hummingbirds, and quail to name a few.

It's very important to recognize the efforts of establishments like these who are good land stewards and share the land responsibly rather than simply take it over. It benefits everyone. And this way, the next time you visit one of these farms or vineyards, you might want to bring your binoculars and guides as well!

The Golden Gate Audubon Society would like to thank Rutherford Grove Winery, Cowgirl Creamery, Trefethen Winery, Straus Family Creamery, The Apple Farmers, Redwood Hill Farm, Sciabica & Sons, Duckhorn Vineyards, and everyone who made this event such a wonderful success!!!

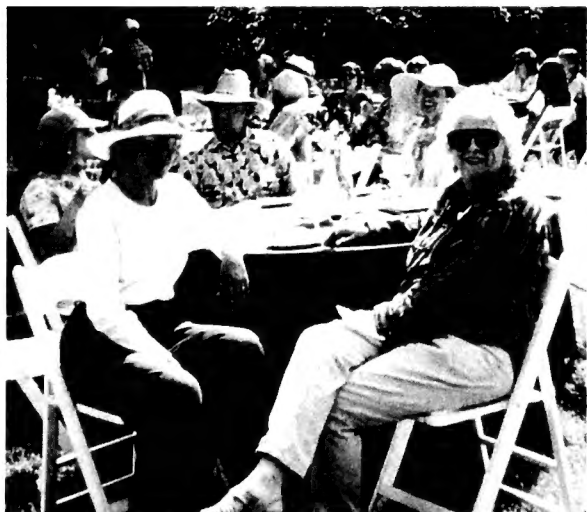


PHOTO BY JOHN GIBBONS

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As a member of National Audubon Society, you are automatically enrolled in the local chapter, Golden Gate Audubon Society. Chapter benefits include receipt of *The Gull*, access to field trips and programs, and the opportunity to volunteer. Call the office if you have any questions.

**Golden Gate Audubon Society**  
2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite G  
Berkeley, CA 94702

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**Golden Gate Audubon Society**  
**2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite G**  
**Berkeley, CA 94702**  
**Phone: (510) 843-2222**  
**Fax: (510) 843-5351**

Office Hours:  
Tuesday - Friday 9-12, 1-4 (please call first)

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